REMARKS

Applicant requests consideration of the art cited in the Information Disclosure Statement filed on August 1, 2007, subsequent to issuance of the outstanding Office Action.

Applicant requests favorable reconsideration and allowance of this application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 1, 3-6, 9, 10, and 14 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 6, 9, 10 and 14 are independent.

Claims 7, 8, 11-13, 15 and 16 have been cancelled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the recited subject matter.

Claims 1, 3, 5, 6, 9, 10 and 14 have been amended and no new claims have been added. No new matter has been added.

Claim 13-16 were provisionally rejected on the ground of non-statutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over Claims 13-16 of co-pending Patent Application No. 10/686,577. Applicant notes that this is a provisional rejection, since the claims of the '577 application have not been patented. Moreover, Applicant submits that Claims 13-16 of the co-pending '577 application have been canceled in an Amendment filed October 15, 2007. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the provisional double-patenting rejection are requested.

Claims 1 and 3-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C.§103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0171743 (Kimizuka et al.), in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,796,839 (Ishiguro et al.). Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections for the reasons discussed below.

As recited in independent Claim 1, the present invention includes, *inter* alia, the feature of executing, up to a node located at a terminal, processing for generating encryption key information for a node of interest on the basis of encryption key information generated for a node located at an upper layer in the hierarchical structure, identification information assigned to the node of interest, and a one-way function, so as to generate encryption keys for each spatial rectangle region. According to this feature, the encryption key for a node of interest is generated on the basis of a generated key for a node of an upper layer, the identification information of the node of interest, and a one-way function. Therefore, the keys of nodes in the same layer, for example, keys represented by nodes (2,0), (2,1) and 2,2) can be different from each other (since the respective identification information uniquely identifying the respective nodes is used in generating the respective keys). Furthermore, due to the features recited in Claim 1, the keys for encrypting each spatial rectangle region of encoded image data can be generated from a key for an uppermost layer. That is, the encoded image data can be managed by only one key even if spatial rectangle regions are encrypted using encryption keys different from each other.

Applicant submits that the cited art fails to disclose or suggest at least the above-mentioned feature of generating encryption keys as recited in Claim 1. Ishiguro merely discloses generating a new key for enabling the use of computer software having a new version, using a key of the previous version of the software and a one-way function. It does not disclose or suggest generating an encryption key for a node of interest based on an encryption key generated for a node located at an upper layer of a hierarchical structure, identification information assigned to the node of interest that uniquely identifies the node, and a one-way function.

Kimizuka likewise fails to disclose or suggest at least the above-mentioned feature of Claim 1, and therefore that reference fails to remedy the deficiencies of Ishiguro. Thus, even if

the two references are considered in combination, they fail to disclose or suggest generating encryption keys as claimed in Claim 1.

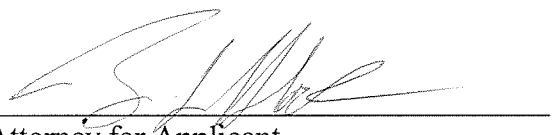
The other independent claims recite similar features to those of Claim 1 discussed above regarding generating encryption keys, or similarly generating decryption keys. Applicant submits that the other independent claims are patentable for reasons similar to Claim 1.

The dependent claims are patentable for at least the same reasons as the independent claims, as well as for the additional features they recite.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant requests reconsideration, withdrawal of the outstanding rejections, and an early Notice of Allowance.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address given below.

Respectfully submitted,



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